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November 21, 2002

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D.
Director and Chief Medical Officer

SUBJECT: **ANTONOVICH MOTION – WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM
UPGRADING CLINICAL SKILLS FOR NURSES**

This is a follow-up to my May 2, 2002 memorandum and to provide you with a status report concerning Supervisor Antonovich's motion approved at your March 5, 2002 Board meeting. The motion instructed the Director of Health Services, in collaboration with the Director of Mental Health, the Sheriff, staff from the Health Care Workforce Development Program, and Labor/Management to report on a number of issues related to the nursing crisis, including upgrading clinical skills of County nurses, as well as nursing recruitment and retention. The following addresses each of the items listed in the motion:

Discuss the feasibility of forming a joint Nursing Shortage Committee to explore ways in which Departments may collaborate to recruit, retain and train nurses.

Representatives from the Department of Health Services (DHS), Sheriff, Department of Mental Health (DMH), Workforce Development Program (WDP), and SEIU Local 660 met on several occasions to discuss and assess their individual recruitment, retention and training needs. On May 7, 2002, the group decided to focus its attention on assisting the Sheriff and DMH in accessing the State's \$60 million Nurse Workforce Initiative funds to develop training programs for their nursing staff. Due to the timeline set forth by the State, the group decided that this effort would be their primary focus.

In addition to the above, both the Sheriff and DMH have been invited to send their Nurse Recruiters or representative(s) to participate in monthly DHS Nurse Recruiter meetings. The

meetings are a forum for Nurse Recruiters to: 1) share information on upcoming job\career fairs and outreach events, 2) coordinate outreach/recruitment events, 3) discuss recruitment ideas and problems, and 4) discuss any additional information that would assist the Nurse Recruiters in enhancing their performance.

DHS and Sheriff Nurse Recruiters attended the NurseWeek Job Fair held on October 25, 2002 as a joint effort and were able to secure recruitment booths adjacent to each other. This was one of Southern California's major nursing career events. Over 155 Vendors were present and approximately 3000 nurses attended.

DHS offered assistance to Sheriff Nurse Recruiters in their efforts toward conducting High School Outreach activities by: 1) providing information about nursing careers in the Sheriff's department to students attending the school that DHS meets with regularly, and 2) providing a list of schools, addresses, contact names and phone numbers of high school located in the Los Angeles County area.

The group plans to continue to meet monthly.

Discuss the availability of Federal and State funds that may be utilized to enhance the County's nurse training, recruitment, and retention efforts.

The above mentioned group met regularly between May and October to organize, plan, and develop a "Solicitation for Proposal" in an effort to obtain a portion of the State's \$60 million Nurse Workforce Initiative funds. The funds would be used to: 1) expand recruitment activities by targeting high school students and progress upward through the colleges, 2) establish a mentoring program designed to provide new hires with a complete and comprehensive understanding of the correctional nursing practices, 3) develop programs to train existing Licensed Vocational Nurses, Licensed Psychiatric Technicians, and Nursing Attendants in the Sheriff and DMH to become Registered Nurses, and 4) develop workplace reforms. The Sheriff contracted the services of a grant writer, who in collaboration with the group completed the "Solicitation for Proposal." On July 31, 2002, the proposal was submitted to the State for review (Exhibit A). On October 11, 2002, the group was notified by the Department of Community and Senior Services (Local Workforce Investment Board) that the proposal was denied by the State. The State, however, asked if the Sheriff and DMH would be interested in submitting a "Concept Paper" that included a modified program that required substantially less funding. On November 11, 2002, the final "Concept Paper" (Exhibit B) was completed and sent to the State. A decision by the State is currently pending.

In addition to the above, the motion instructed the Director of Health Services to report on the following issues:

Existing retraining programs for non-nursing staff interested in becoming nurses.

One of the goals of the WDP is to provide training and educational opportunities for DHS

employees to fill critical labor shortages. As reported in May, 1,200 DHS employees responded to a survey about their interest in becoming a RN or LVN. Of the 1,200 respondents, 564 were non-nursing personnel. Since the last report, an individual assessment of respondents resulted in identifying eight individuals who are ready to begin a RN program. This means that they have completed all the academic pre-requisites, with a better than "C" average, and have a satisfactory attendance record and performance evaluation. Eight additional individuals qualify if they pass a "recency" exam to measure their knowledge of science, because these pre-requisites were taken over five years ago.

WDP is working with the Regional Health Occupations Resource Center (RHORC), a consortium of all of the community colleges in Los Angeles County, and the Los Angeles County College of Nursing and Allied Health to meet the educational needs of DHS employees who qualify to enter a nursing program. WDP is preparing a contract with Mount San Antonio Community College, which is the legal entity that directs the RHORC, to be presented to your Board in early January. The RHORC contract will allow WDP to establish on site nursing classes at DHS facilities in the geographic areas of the County not served by the County's College of Nursing and Allied Health. The RHORC contract will also provide instructors and class schedules designed to allow DHS employees to complete their studies with the least disruption to their work schedules. The RHORC contract will also allow WDP to offer science prerequisites, such as Microbiology, Anatomy and Physiology to the 88 non-nursing DHS employees who only lack one such course before they qualify for an RN program. By developing this contract for a customized training program, the WDP will tap into all the health care education resources of the Community College system, and address the special issues regarding scheduling and location to maximize the successful participation of DHS employees.

WDP also received surveys from 277 non-nursing staff that would like to become Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVN). WDP is assessing their performance evaluations and attendance records to select the most qualified individuals to be sponsored in LVN educational programs. WDP previously conducted a scan of LVN training providers in Los Angeles County; DHS will consult with County Counsel to determine the methodology for selecting a provider(s) from this inventory of educational providers.

Establish tutoring and mentoring programs similar to the one in East Los Angeles College in the northern County area.

Since last reported, Los Angeles Valley College (LAVC) has appointed a new Director over their School of Nursing. The DHS Nurse Recruitment Office met in April 2002 with the prior Director at LAVC School of Nursing. Unfortunately, she was unable to provide a program proposal for contract development. Once DHS was notified of the change in management, a meeting was scheduled to provide an outline of the Tutoring and Mentoring program. On October 30, 2002, The DHS Nurse Recruitment Office met with LAVC's Dean of Economic Development and the new School of Nursing Director. They were enthusiastic about moving forward and establishing a program at their school. LAVC hopes to get a program proposal to DHS by mid November 2002.

Establish the nurse faculty grant program to enhance nursing school recruitment efforts.

The Department continues to work towards identifying funds to support a nurse faculty grant program.

Develop a review course program to assist the Department of Health Services' employed nursing students in preparing for the National Council of License Examination (NCLEX) for Registered Nurses.

WDP has identified two full-time employees who are ready to take the NCLEX examination and will be assisting them by offering a review course.

In addition, WDP has identified 23 DHS employees who are already enrolled in nursing programs and will be assisting them with their tuition in the future. They are being enrolled into the Workforce Investment Act job training system so that they can qualify for assistance using the funds allocated for WDP.

Identify available departmental funding to establish the above programs.

The Department will project budget requirements related to the Tutoring/Mentoring and Faculty Grant programs once preliminary guidelines are developed.

DHS programs managed or developed by WDP are funded through a grant from the Workforce Investment Act.

I will keep you apprised of significant progress related to the above referenced initiatives. In the meantime, if you have any questions or require additional information, please let me know.

TLG:dp
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c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Director of Human Resources
Director of Mental Health
Sheriff